

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INDIA: COMMUNAL UNREST IN GUJARAT

13 March 2002

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 50,000

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 50,000 has been released, and the Federation does not anticipate further needs. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update and, as circumstances demand, the regular updates on the India earthquake rehabilitation operation (appeal no 20/01).

The Situation

Since 27 February, India's western state of Gujarat has been in the grip of serious communal unrest and violence following the attack on an Ahmedabad bound passenger train at Godhra railway station, resulting in significant death and injury. Torching of homes and businesses, attacks on individuals and rioting brought the city and the entire state to a halt affecting an estimated 50,000-60,000 people as homes were destroyed, businesses shut down and food supplies were cut off. As of last weekend, the government had registered 37,000 persons in 22 relief centres 'camps' around Ahmedabad.

The quality of the camps varies and most of the relief camps are crowded, with many families sharing class rooms or corridors in schools or staying outdoors under temporary tarpaulins. Some camps have been established in former community halls and public buildings while others have been established by unscathed communities that have offered space in their homes and common areas for those whose houses were lost or those who are afraid to return home. Cooking takes place outdoors in a communal 'kitchen' and the government has been able to provide some temporary water and sanitation facilities. The camps are being managed by neighbourhood leaders who have assumed a leadership role within the camps during the emergency. According to the government there are three categories of affected people currently seeking shelter in the camps:

- Families and individuals who have lost their homes and family members who will require long term support.
- Those who are traumatised or have suffered from recoverable injuries and can be helped more quickly.
- Persons seeking refuge in the camps until the current situation is clarified.

With the arrival of the summer season in India, day time temperatures are beginning to climb and without shade the heat of the sun can be overwhelming. Schools in the most affected areas have not resumed and children spend their days with their families at the camp. As the day labourers are unable to resume working, those living

in the camps spend their time anxiously waiting for the outcome of the situation. To date the security in the camps has been good and communities are doing their best to support each other.

Many of the streets on the city's east side are lined with burned-out buildings. In addition hotels and individual businesses also appear to have been targeted for acts of arson.

Among the most vulnerable are the city's substantial community of day labourers who have been unable to earn money because of the closing of businesses and damage sustained within the city's industrial district. Many of these labourers and their families have fled their homes without belongings and the district has been devastated.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Relief: The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) is concentrating on 11 camps for relief distributions and health assistance so that its staff and volunteers can ensure that basic needs are provided until the third week of March when the overall situation should be clearer. The IRCS Secretary General, Deputy Secretary, Chairman of IRCS and Chairman of IRCS Gujarat State Branch made an official visit to Ahmedabad on Monday 11 March.

Since 5 March the IRCS has carried out between three and five distributions per day and 8,350 people have received continuous relief assistance from the Society in Ahmedabad. In addition to the activities in Ahmedabad, IRCS branches in Baroda, Bharuch, Bhavanagar, Deesa, Godhra, Himatnagar, Palanpur, Patan, Sidhpur, and Surat have been providing essential services such as medical assistance, community kitchens and relief materials.

IRCS teams comprise volunteers responsible for gathering information about health and relief needs. Rapid assessments conducted by teams of IRCS volunteers are made both prior to and during the distribution, since the size of the camps changes on a daily basis as people from outlying affected villages have come to Ahmedabad seeking assistance.

Decisions on what should be distributed and where distributions should take place are based on discussions with the camp leaders, affected people and personal observations. The leaders have been responsible for compiling beneficiary lists, which are presented to the IRCS prior to the handing over of relief items.

The branch has been able to procure goods for distribution in Ahmedabad and has also relied on its previous stocks. Upon arrival at the camps relief items are given to the camp managers who are then responsible for distributing the goods to individual camp residents. When visiting a camp for a second time the IRCS verifies that previously delivered goods were appropriate and distributed as planned.

The IRCS Gujarat State and Ahmedabad district branches are working closely with students from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and a scientific institute in Ahmedabad. One of the IIM student volunteers was selected to assist the IRCS with coordinating and scheduling relief distributions. The students, who had spontaneously collected money and wanted to donate it to the IRCS, were invited by the Society to participate in relief initiatives, which they were pleased to do. Volunteer doctors and nurses from the IRCS Ahmedabad branch are surveying the centres, collecting information and supervising distributions.

The IRCS will continue providing assistance to the 11 camps until 16 March. A chart showing IRCS relief and health distributions to beneficiaries from 5 through 12 March is shown below.

Location	Number of beneficiaries	Number of Families	Number of Children	Location in city	Goods Distributed
Tuesday, 5 March					
Daruiapur Bahawir Hall	650	112	165	NE	Medical supplies, clothes, blankets
Shahibaug, Dariyakhan Ghummat, Municipal School	4'700	900	1'320	NE	Medical supplies, clothes, blankets
Wednesday, 6 March					
Shah Alam	6'500	1'100	1'400	SE	Medical supplies and food
Vatva Village	2'000	400	600	SE	Medical supplies, clothes.
Vatva Mosque	750	150	200	SE	Medical supplies
Thursday, 7 March					
Vatva Kutb-e-Alam	750	150	200	SE	Medical supplies clothes, food
Vatva al Ziya	2'000	400	600	SE	Medical supplies, clothes, food
Near Vatva Canal	500	100	150	SE	Medical supplies, clothes, food
Dani Limda, Kishen Nagar	500	100	150	SE	Medical supplies, clothes, food
Friday, 8 March					
Bapunagar school	850	170	250	SE	Food, clothes
Bapunagar centre	8'000	1'500	2'200	SE	Food, clothes
Saturday, 9 March					
Geeta Mandhir	500	100	150	E	Food, clothes
Parikhchit Lalnagar	400	50	75	E	Food, clothes
Sunday, 10 March					
Vatwa Canal	981	196	294	E	Food
Vatwa Ziya Maszid	1200-1500	240-300	450	E	Food
Vatwa Qutab-e-alam	622	124	186	E	Food
Idgah Asarwa	500	100	150	E	Food
Dariyapur	800	100	150	E	Food
Tuesday, 12 March					
Parikshit Nagar Area	1'700	360	520	E	Food, hygiene supplies
Kalupur Saryu Mandir	500	100	150	E	Food, blankets and hygiene supplies

Health: The ambulance service provided by the Sabarkantha District Branch in Himatnagar has evacuated 16 seriously injured patients from outlying villages to emergency medical facilities in Ahmedabad and also transported 12 patients requiring transferrals. In addition, the branch's blood bank supplied the civil hospital with 98 units of blood, meeting all of the blood requirements of the civil hospital.

The main problems being treated by doctors in the camps are burn and stab wounds as well as 'normal' diseases. So far there have been no outbreaks of diarrhoea or other contagious diseases, however there have been reports in the press that sanitation in some camps is becoming a problem. Most of the camps are requesting medicines that are becoming scarce. In some of the centres one classroom was used as a ward with patients lying on blankets on the floor with the most serious cases brought to hospitals.

Medical supplies identified for distribution by the IRCS include, antibiotics, analgesics, oral rehydration salts, skin ointments, cotton, chlorine tablets, bandages and cough syrups.

Coordination: The IRCS is coordinating its activities with the Government and other NGOs in the area to ensure that resources are used to their maximum potential and that there is no duplication of efforts. On 9 March a coordination meeting was called by the Collector of Ahmedabad with agencies and NGOs providing assistance in the camps. The Collector outlined the government's assistance plans for the next eight weeks. Among the

intended activities, the government is offering victims financial aid as well as assistance with food, water and sanitation and health care.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

- *The Indian Red Cross Society National Society; Phone 91 11 371 6441; e-mail indcross@vsnl.com*
- *Floyd Barnaby, Head of Delegation; Phone 91 11 322 4206; e-mail: ifrcin85@ifrc.org*
- *Charles Eldred-Evans, India desk; Phone 41 22 730 4320; e-mail eldred@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

John Horekens
Head
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia Pacific Department